



Cheltenham Local History Society

Newsletter No. 81

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March 2015



Picture by courtesy of Jill Waller

EDITORIAL

This evocative sketch by George Rowe, dated 1840, is immediately recognisable as the Promenade. There are the shops and Municipal Offices on the right and the Queen's Hotel in the distance. The trees, too, are familiar, though it is interesting to see that they appear to be growing directly out of the un-tarmacked road surface rather than in a raised verge. Some of the buildings on the left are not shops but private dwellings, those farther down still having little railed gardens in front. The most striking thing of all is the total lack of wheeled traffic. Cheltenham was very much a spa town at that time, popular with visitors, and on a summer morning such as this appears to be (the sun is in the east) there would surely have been some carriages about. Perhaps Rowe just didn't like drawing them.

Kath Boothman

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ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The Society's Annual General Meeting will be held on Tuesday 19th May in the Council Chamber, Municipal Offices, Promenade, Cheltenham at 7.30 pm prompt. (SEE AGENDA AND PREVIOUS AGM MINUTES ENCLOSED WITH THIS NEWSLETTER—**please bring these papers with you to the meeting**). The Mayor, as President of the Society, will chair the meeting and give a short address.

Election of Officers and Committee 2015-16

Officers and committee members (as listed in the 2014 AGM Minutes) will resign in accordance with the Society's constitution, although they can be re-elected if they so wish. Nominations are invited for Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer and for committee members. If you would like to nominate someone or be nominated yourself, either for one of these posts or as a committee member, please contact the Secretary Chris Conoley (e-mail chris.conoley@bopenworld.com or phone 01452 700428) for a nomination form.

After the AGM business is concluded there will be an illustrated talk by **John Putley** entitled **Blood, Guts and a Little off the Top!**

SUMMER VISITS

You are invited to take part in the following visits with the Society. **IN ALL CASES PLEASE COMPLETE AND RETURN THE SLIP ENCLOSED WITH THIS NEWSLETTER WITH YOUR PAYMENT AND A STAMPED ADDRESSED ENVELOPE. There will be a priority booking period for members only until 11th April and, as places are limited on these visits, you are advised to book early to be sure of getting a place.** If you wish to bring a non-member as a guest, please indicate this on the slip when booking your own place. If there is any availability after 11th April, places will be offered to non-members in order of application. **If you find that you cannot attend a visit for which you have booked, please inform Sue Brown (01242 231837) or another committee member of your cancellation, so that someone else may have the opportunity to take your place.** If you don't let us know that you cannot attend, we shall expect you to pay the cost.

Friday 26th June leaving at 9.30 am from Royal Well, returning at 4.30 pm **RODMARTON MANOR and CHALFORD & SELSLEY CHURCHES**

The day starts with a morning visit to the 'epitome of the ideals of the Cotswold Arts and Crafts movement', Rodmarton Manor. There will be tours of the house and its 'outdoor roomed' garden, both designed by Ernest Barnsley in the early 20th century, with later contributions from his brother Sidney and from Norman

Jewson, who designed the chapel. The house is constructed entirely of local materials and all the fittings were hand-worked by local craftsmen. The afternoon will be spent visiting two churches in the area with strong Arts and Crafts connections. Christ Church at Chalford has a wide range of Arts and Crafts furnishings including work by Jewson, Barnsley and Waals. All Saints at Selsley



Rodmarton Manor

is a mid-19th century church by Bodley in the French Early Gothic style. Its Arts and Crafts connection lies in its glorious stained glass, designed by Philip Webb and executed by William Morris and associates (including Burne-Jones, Rossetti and Ford Madox Brown).

Wednesday 15th July at 6.00 pm and Wednesday 22nd July at 6.00 pm

South Cheltenham Heritage Walk

David Elder will lead a walk covering the southern part of the town starting at the Town Hall at 6.00 pm and finishing at the Beehive pub in Montpellier Villas at about 7.30 p.m. The walk will draw on material from the thematic walks included in his book *Cheltenham Heritage Walks*.

Wednesday 19th August at 6.30 pm

Hidden Tewkesbury

This two-hour walk, led by John Dixon, is aimed at people who like walking and who are curious to know the history of Tewkesbury beyond the usual tourist attractions. It is vital to look upwards and behind! Thus we shall explore the alleys and you will understand why they exist, we shall visit industrial Tewkesbury (1780-1870) and we could even find the vestiges of the **second railway station**, which afforded a link from Ashchurch to Malvern (1864-1962).

Wednesday 26th August at 6.30 pm

Tewkesbury's Treasures

This one-hour itinerary, also led by John Dixon, is for people who find walking a little more challenging but still want to know more about the history of the town's historic buildings. It is vital to look upwards and behind! If you prove discerning, you will be shown the vestiges of Tewkesbury's **first railway station**, which was (from 1840-1929) next only to St Pancras Station in its Gothic beauty!

Both walks will start at the **southbound bus stop in The Crescent** (outside the Abbey eastern gates); car parking in the nearby (less than 5 minutes' walk away) **Vineyards car park** is free after 17.30 pm. **Both walks** will end at a pub or restaurant where you can enjoy a drink or a meal. The 41 bus for Cheltenham leaves Tewkesbury at 22 minutes past the hour every hour until 11.22 pm.

EVENING LECTURE PROGRAMME 2015-16

Meetings start at 7.30 pm in the Council Chamber, Municipal Offices, Promenade

Tuesday 15th September:

Nick Humphris—Chedworth Roman Villa

Tuesday 20th October:

John Loosley—Childhood Employment in Gloucestershire

Tuesday 17th November:

Ray Wilson—The Mills of the River Chelt

Tuesday 8th December:

Ian Hollingsbee—Inside the Wire: the Prisoner of War Camps and Hostels of Gloucestershire 1939-48

Tuesday 26th January 2016:

Research and Display Evening

Tuesday 16th February 2016:

Paul Barnett—Port to Port: the Sharpness Canal

Tuesday 15th March 2016:

Lionel Waldron—The Cotswold House

Tuesday 19th April 2016:

Tony Conder—Gloucester's Railways, Then and Now

Tuesday 17th May 2016:

AGM followed by Gwilym Davies—Folk Music of Gloucestershire

MORNING LECTURES 2015-16

Morning lectures will take place at St Luke's Hall, St Luke's Place, Cheltenham. A donation of £1.00 from all those attending these lectures is appreciated. Tea/coffee and biscuits are served (no charge) from 10.00 am. Lectures start at 10.30 am. All welcome. Parking at the Hall is for disabled only—please contact Chris Conoley (01452 700428) beforehand if you wish to reserve a space.

Tuesday 6th October:

**Geoff Newsom/Caroline Meller—
A Historical Tour of
Gotherington**

Tuesday 5th April 2016:

**Hugh Torrens— The Forgotten
Story of the Cotswold Stone Pipe
Company, which tried but failed
to provide Clean Water to the
Cities of London, Dublin and
Manchester between 1805 and
1815**

Reminder...

MORNING LECTURE

*Tuesday 14th April, 10.00 am for 10.30 am
at St Luke's Church Hall,
St Luke's Place, Cheltenham*

**Joanna Vials—The Indefatigable
Mr Cotham: Pioneering Priest who
built St Gregory's**

*The 2015 CLHS Journal will be
available for collection at this meeting.*

FOR YOUR DIARY

Leckhampton Local History Society

www.llhs.org.uk

Meetings are held at St Philip's and St James' Church House, Painswick Road, Cheltenham at 8.00 pm. Admission £1 for visitors.

Thursday 19th March:

Chris Wesley—St Peter's Churchyard VC Winners

Thursday 16th April:

Michael Cuttell—Ullenwood Court, US Military Hospital

Thursday 21st May:

Amy Woolacott—The Cotswold Hunt & Local Smithies

Prestbury Local History Society

www.prestburyhistory.btck.co.uk

Meetings are held at Prestbury Women's Institute Hall (corner of Bouncer's Lane/Prestbury Road), starting at 7.30 pm. Non-members pay £2.

Monday 23rd March:

Val Porter - The W.I. in Prestbury.

Monday 27th April:

Roger Beacham – Launch of 'Prestbury A Walk through Time'.

Monday 18th May at the United Reformed Church:

Fiona Hall – Prestbury United Reformed Church

Gotherington and Area Local History Society

Meetings are held in Gotherington Village Hall, starting at 8.00 pm. Visitors are welcome, £2 per meeting.

Tuesday 24th March:

Heather Dawson—An Introduction to the Grave of Mrs Getty

Tuesday 28th April:

Philip Moss—Gloucester Castle and Prison

Tuesday 26th May:

Geoff North—Cheltenham's Ornamental Ironwork

Charlton Kings Local History Society

www.charltonkings.org.uk

All meetings are held at the Baptist Church, Church Street, starting at 7.30 pm.

Tuesday 24th March:

Carolyn Greet—Charles Hale, Musician and Town Surveyor

Tuesday 28th April:

Angela Applegate—Gustav Holst and the Holst Museum

Churchdown Local History Society

Meetings are held at the Community Centre, Parton Road, Churchdown, starting at 7.30 pm. Non-members pay £2.

Thursday 9th April:

Tim Marrs—Prefabs, Postwar Palaces for the People

Swindon Village Society

Meetings are held at Swindon Village Hall at 7.30 pm. Non-members pay £1.

Wednesday 18th March:

Geoff North—Cheltenham's First World War VAD Hospitals

Saturday 11th April, starting from Village Hall car park at 9.30 am:

Annual Bird and Nature Walk

Wednesday 20th May:

Gordon Ottewell—Laurie Lee: a talk with readings

Wednesday 17th June, starting from Village Hall car park at 7.00 pm:

Annual Garden Visit (destination tba)

Cotswold Archaeology Mick Aston Lecture

*Wednesday 18th March at 7.30 pm
at the Bingham Hall, King Street, Cirencester*

**Tim Darvill, Chairman
and Neil Holbrook, Chief Executive**

GRISMOND'S TOWER AND CIRENCESTER'S WESTERN ROMAN CEMETERIES

Our former trustee Mick Aston died in 2013. Mick was well known for his passion for the past and his utter dedication to taking archaeology out to the people and communicating his heart-felt excitement (he said once that he suffered from incurable enthusiasm!). In order to remember Mick we have decided that henceforth our Annual Lecture in Cirencester will be known as the Cotswold Archaeology Mick Aston Lecture. **Entry is free.**

Ideas Needed!

The Society will as usual be taking part in the GLHA Local History Day at Pate's Grammar School on October 24th. The theme this year is to be 'Immigration and Emigration', and the Committee feels we should decide in good time how we wish to approach it. Should we focus on resettlement to and from other countries, such as Australia or Canada, or should we consider movement of people within the UK or even just to and from other parts of the county? All suggestions are welcome: please contact the Chairman David Scriven or any committee member.

REVIEWS

At our meeting on November 18th the speaker was **Rose Hewlett**, whose subject was **Victorian Village Life** with particular reference to Frampton upon Severn. She said she herself had strong ties to the village: her great-great-grandfather had built the chapel there in 1776. To illustrate her talk she was using a series of sketches done in the 1860s (some by the daughters of Henry Clifford Clifford, the lord of Frampton Manor), showing nearly every cottage in Frampton and the names of their occupants. As this tied in nicely with the 1861 census it made a good starting point for considering what Frampton, population about 800, was like to live in at that time. Lying only 5½ miles from the railway, near the A38 and with easy access to the Gloucester and Berkeley canal, it had good communications and was in fact on an old trade route. Its spacious village green was said to be the longest in England. Many of the houses by the green were still recognisable from the old sketches, and Frampton Court was still the 'big house'. In the

1860s about 200 families lived in the village. Highest in rank were the Cliffords, whose pedigree went back to the Norman conquest. The vicar, the Revd Maurice Ferdinand St John, started a parish magazine and opened a night school for boys. He and the chapel minister William

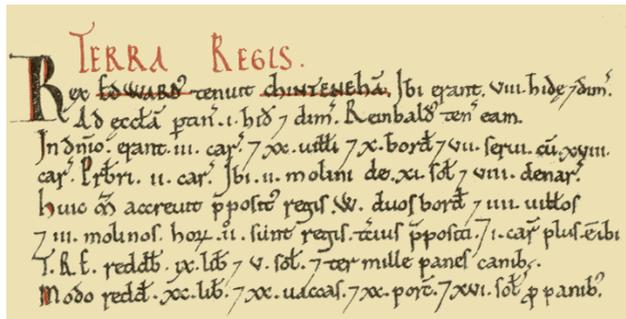


Frampton Court

Lewis tried to teach the local people to plan ahead, encouraging them to invest in the newly-introduced post office savings accounts and promoting temperance. Merchants made their living from the trade on the canal, which was plentiful at that time. One of them, Thomas Barnard, proprietor of the brick works at the south end of the village, started a Mechanics' Institute. The eight or ten tenant farmers, mostly tenants of the Cliffords, formed another class, and there were many resident tradesmen, including a cabinet maker who was also the town crier. Most of them were non-conformists and attended the chapel. Watermen made an uncertain living plying up and down the canal, and life was hardly less insecure for the agricultural workers who formed the largest social group. Those who did casual work as day labourers found life particularly hard in winter. Clifford helped them, and his daughters ran soup-kitchens. The nearest workhouse was at Eastington but only the sick went there from Frampton. There was no great social divide, largely thanks to the vicar and his musical wife, who organised joint choir performances with other churches. The choir was popular, not least because choristers were allowed to miss school to sing at weekday weddings. A National School was founded in the village in 1842, inspected annually and charging 1d

(later 2d) a week. Very poor parents who could not afford it sent their children to the free chapel school instead. The old village houses had long gardens where people grew food for themselves and to sell at Gloucester market. There was a post office, several shops and two pubs called The Bell and The Three Horse-shoes. The annual cottage garden show was a highlight of the year and there were lavish celebrations in honour of the Prince of Wales' wedding in 1863. The 1860s were perhaps the heyday of village life. Answering questions at the end, the speaker said that owing to its social cohesion Frampton had known little serious poverty. Even today, though larger, it was still quite a tight-knit community.

On December 9th **David Smith** spoke about **The Origins of Gloucestershire**, explaining that he had first become interested about 20 years ago when the County Council asked him to look into the history of the county to help it resist the then government's plan to reorganise local government. Later, in 2006-7, he had been involved in an enquiry led by the High Sheriff of Gloucestershire into the origins of the shrievalty. The enquiry had concluded that the first sheriff was appointed in the year 1007. Written sources for that remote time, 30 generations ago, are sparse. There is the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle and various charters, and useful information about the reign of King Edward, before the Norman Conquest, is to be found in Domesday. The study of place names, tied in with archaeological evidence, can be helpful. Burton, for instance, meant a fortified settlement, perhaps a lookout



The entry for Cheltenham in Domesday Book

post for a nearby town. Acton, 'oak settlement', might have been where foresters lived who worked and supplied oak. The period before 1000AD remains murky, however. Little is known of the tribes who occupied the area, though we do know their meeting places. Botlow was one of them: 'low' means a tump or barrow, which would provide a suitable eminence for a speaker to stand on. Crickley Hill has a promontory that was a sacred place used for ritual purposes. Ancient meeting places like these go back to Roman times or earlier. The tribal areas coalesced into kingdoms. The basic unit for the organisation of land was the hide, a piece of land of variable extent considered sufficient to support one household. It was a very old unit of assessment used for gathering troops and taxes. For bigger properties hides were counted in 5s, 10s or 100s, but the 'hundred' later used as

an administrative division did not necessarily contain 100 hides. Fortified towns could call on the hundreds for men to defend them, each man being expected to defend five feet of town wall. Unlike nearby counties Gloucestershire remained for a long time divided into four 'shires' centred on Roman towns: Winchcomb, Cirencester, Gloucester and either Bristol or Bath. The word 'shire' originally carried the sense of 'share'. Mercia was divided into shires first in the time of Ethelred the Unready, who became king in 979 shortly before Danish incursions began. The Danes came just to plunder initially, but from 995 they no longer went home for the winter. Ethelred, unable to get enough men to fight them, lost ground, and tried unsuccessfully five times to buy them off. In 1005 he made Edric Streona, a powerful and warlike member of his court, alderman of Mercia, and it was Edric who set the boundaries of the shires to facilitate levying taxes and troops within them and thus resist the Danes more effectively. Between 1007 and 1016 many other shires were created in Mercia, and it became an established way of defining an area. Shire reeves (sheriffs) with extensive powers were appointed in each shire. They tended to be ambitious men, and successive kings tried to rein them in, gradually reducing their authority over time. In 1170 Henry II punished them for abuses of power by abolishing them altogether for a while. In the 13th century they lost control over royal property; in 1371 their term of office was set at one year; in 1461 the sheriff's court was abolished and replaced by quarter sessions. Some shire boundaries are much older than others and there have been many changes, the creation of the short-lived County of Avon being among the most recent. Other modern attempts to alter county boundaries have generally been equally unsuccessful.

The audience obviously enjoyed this thought-provoking talk very much and asked numerous questions at the end.

Research and Display Evening

The annual social evening was held on January 20th and attracted a good crowd. This time the Pittville Room was used to show once again the Society's 'Cheltenham Life 1914-19' display from the History Day at St Matthew's Church last July. Friends of Pittville were also there with a display on Pittville history. In the Sherborne Room were displays on the Cheltenham Fire Brigades (with many medals and photographs) and South Town, and refreshments were served as usual in the Cambray Room. Displays in the Council Chamber included 1930s newspaper advertisements, maps and photos showing the location of the homes of Cheltenham soldiers killed in World War I and a pictorial biography of Cecil Minett. There was also a large display relating to the Cheltenham VCH project (see James Hodsdon's report on p14) and the VCH editor John Chandler and Alex Craven, editor of the early modern section, were present to help to promote it and attract more volunteers. A well-stocked raffle was held, the proceeds going as usual to the Mayor's charities, which this year are the Aston Project and the Butterfly Garden. It raised £105.

On February 17th a large audience gathered to hear **Adrian Barlow**, who took as his theme **Cheltenham: the Architecture of a Victorian Town**. He began with a picture of a Penfold pillar box, which he said was standing in for a statue of Queen Victoria. (Members of the audience later told him where such statues could be found.) Next he showed the town's coat of arms from the Playhouse, pointing out that with its symbolic representations of mineral springs, tree-lined streets and books it was an early example of a town marketing itself: there was more to Cheltenham than the spa, and it was a centre of learning even before the major public schools were founded. The town had seen some failed ventures in the 19th century, notably the Winter Gardens and the Pittville Spa project, but it had attracted a growing artisan population. St Philip's and St James' church, which had been rebuilt in 1882 on the same site to seat 800, served a neighbourhood of small houses which are even now interspersed with workshops. He showed the little-known catacombs under the church, which date back to the original church. Houses on one side of St Philip's Street, built in the 1820s, had basements below street level, whereas those facing them were in the familiar, slightly later style with semi-basements and steps up to the front door. A much grander residence was Brandon House (1834) on the corner of Grafton Road. He himself lived in a cottage once occupied by servants of that house. By then styles were changing: he showed pictures of Montpellier shops with a balustrade at roof level and a mansard roof with two layers of attics. Cornerways, The Park, the work of the Samuel Daukes, was Italianate, but Daukes was equally capable of working in Gothic or classical styles. A house in Tivoli Road built about 1845 had a Tudor porch and Gothic windows. Wellington Square showed similar features, but behind the facade the houses were pure Cheltenham regency. Pittville had villas built in the 1860s with typical Victorian features such as fake quoins on the corners, simple large-paned windows and wide eaves. On one of them he pointed out a tiny window just below the eaves, whereas the house next door had dormer windows, marking the growing fashion for putting staff accommodation in the attics. Lypiatt Terrace (c1840) was another example of Daukes' work with Italian features, notable for its symmetry. The popularity of the Italian lakes as a tourist destination at that time brought a vogue for Italian styling. As a contrast he showed the Model School built in the grounds of St Paul's College in 1854, a very early work of G F Bodley. It was important for architectural history because it was so radical, even placing the largest windows on the top floor. The architecture of the Ladies' College owed much to Dorothea Beale, who believed in the influence of beautiful surroundings on young minds. He admired the lovely stained glass, stone carving and use of polychromatic stone. There was much fine detail too in Cheltenham College chapel (1896), which he declared to be one of the best school chapels in the country. The later 19th century had produced much excellent brickwork, the Gas Company building in Gloucester Road being a prime example, and some very grand street furniture, especially decorative lamps. Everywhere, he concluded, Cheltenham was as much post-regency as regency. Questions followed, with a lively discussion of street lamps in particular.

South Cheltenham—200 Years of Trading History

The South Cheltenham Local Traders' History website is a community project which aims to bring alive the history of the shops and businesses in the Bath Road, Suffolks and Tivoli areas. The project has drawn upon the knowledge of traders and residents, as well as members of Cheltenham Local History Society, and I would like to appeal to all readers of the Newsletter



Suffolk Parade in 1950

for any information, interesting memories, anecdotes, or photographs relating to the various businesses in those parts of the town.

To find the website please enter <http://www.cheltenhamsouthtown.org> in your internet browser search field and navigate to the individual businesses' pages via the coloured maps or drop down menus.

I would be very pleased to hear from anyone who may be able to help. I can be reached, by email to stuart.manton1@gmail.com, through the website 'Contacts' page or by telephone to 01242 262771.

Stuart Manton

The Deerhurst Lecture 2015



'The post-Reformation chancel fittings at Deerhurst: a unique survival'

Trevor Cooper, Chairman of the Ecclesiological Society

Saturday 12th September 2015 at 7.30 pm in St Mary's Church, Deerhurst

Admission on the Door from 7.00 pm.

Tickets (to include a glass of wine and cheese) £5.00, students £3.00

*FEATURE***REFLECTIONS ON THE HISTORY OF THE PLOUGH**

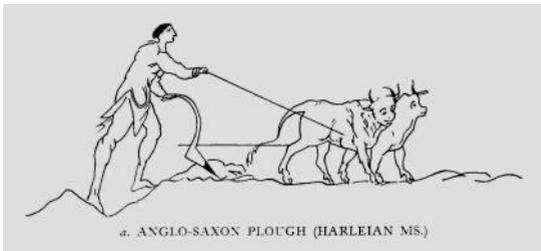
In the church calendar is a day known as Farm Sunday, and this year my local parish church in Minsterworth held a Farm Sunday celebration at which a selection of farmers' implements were on display. As well as things like a milk churn, a cluster of milking cups, seeds and even a pair of wellies, there was an old plough loaned for the occasion by a local farmer. This is it

... and it made me consider the easily overlooked history of the simple plough, and in particular how little it had changed over thousands of years.



In Ancient Egypt, around 3,000 years ago, the plough used was a very basic hand-held wooden implement with a single vertical wooden blade or coulter which cut

through the soil. This device was usually pulled by a team of oxen. And this is how it was done for eons of time even into the Anglo Saxon period, although by then the coulter had been strengthened by means of iron sheathing.



Later came a significant (dare I say 'earth-moving') development, namely the invention of the curved iron mould board or blade which, with the coulter in front, was actually able to dig and turn over the soil in one action. A contemporary English illustration from the 14th century shows such a device in use, still drawn by oxen. And surprising as it may seem, this was the way farmers, using oxen or horses, did their ploughing right up to recent times.



The invention of the steam engine led in the mid-19th century to steam ploughing, whereby a plough was drawn across the field by two steam locomotives working at opposite sides of the

field. The extra power of the steam engine also allowed farmers to bring in multiple blades on their ploughs for the first time. Unfortunately the use of steam was too expensive for the ordinary farmer, who carried on doing what farmers had done for centuries. According to the farmer who lent the plough for the display, his simple single share plough was regularly used up to the mid-1900s, and there is also a nice picture of an oxen-drawn single share plough in use on the Cirencester estate in 1945.



It was only until after WWII and the availability of increasingly more powerful tractors that farmers could begin to use the types of modern multi-bladed and elaborate implements we are used to seeing today. The timeless rural scene of oxen or horses pulling a plough is now long gone but, despite all the modern technology, the basic mould blade of medieval times is still used.

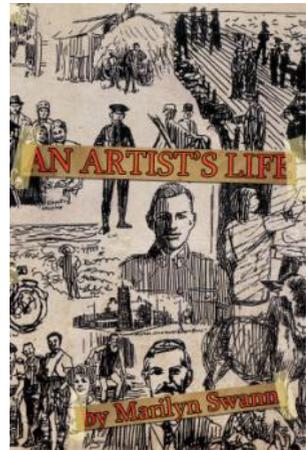
Terry Moore-Scott

NEW PUBLICATION

AN ARTIST'S LIFE

by Marilyn Swann

The book traces the life of the author (a member of the Society) from the interwar years in London, where she was born, and her childhood during World War II to the present day. Her account of living conditions in her early years will evoke many memories in those who also lived through those times. Marilyn Swann always had a passion for drawing and painting (not much encouraged by her family) and later worked as a commercial artist to support herself and finance the creative work she really wanted to do. She moved to Cheltenham in 1997, after she retired, and still paints while also writing books. She is both an artist and an observer: her vivid descriptions of the world about her, be it people, landscapes or townscape, could only come from an artist with a keen eye for detail.



Published in 2014 in paperback by Austin Macauley Publishers Ltd, price £8.99

SOCIETY NEWS

New Members

A warm welcome is extended to the following:

Mrs Sue Preece and Mr Fred Wainwright
 Peter and Catherine Ray
 Mrs Gemma Hargreaves
 Mrs Vera Gomme
 Brian and Pat Johnson

Mr M Davies
 Michael and Judy Thomas
 Anthony Noel
 Mrs Siân Jennings

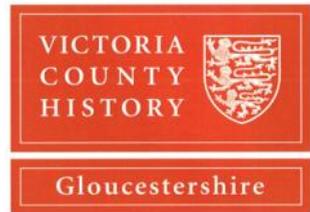
VCH News

Victoria County History

It's now just about a year since research started properly on the Cheltenham 'Big Red Book', and the first drafts are beginning to come in. Beth Hartland has scoured the medieval sources, and has written up the 'manorial descent' from the earliest times, and has also produced a fuller account of Redgrove, which has always been a bit of a mystery as it was detached from the rest of Cheltenham to be part of the

lands of Llanthony Priory and gets little mention in most Cheltenham records. These drafts will be going online before too long. Likewise, Alex Craven has been writing up his notes on the immediate post-reformation period, having made lots of interesting discoveries in odd corners of various archives. I'm delighted to say that we have managed to engage Alex for a further year, which will be good news for all the Cheltenham volunteers, who appreciate his approachable manner. You may have seen examples of the recent discoveries at the research evening in January – our thanks to Sally Self for assembling a coherent and informative display from various contributors. Sally has also very kindly offered to host two more 'Tea and Talk' sessions, as VCH

fundraisers, on 3 June and 1 July (see the enclosed leaflet for details). The first of these last summer was a resounding success, and my strong advice is, in the time-honoured words, 'book early to avoid disappointment'. Meanwhile, if any readers



picked up a VCH standing order leaflet in January and haven't yet filled it in, please please do so soon, as we need all the support possible, to keep the project going at the rate we've now established.

James Hodsdon

Gloucestershire Archives Cataloguing Project

The Cataloguing Group has been told by Gloucestershire Archives that the Winterbotham and Gurney, Solicitors (D2202) archive which we catalogued is now live and available to be searched by the public through their Locate online catalogue. There are 58 boxes which came to a total of 2990 entries. If you enter D2202 into the 'finding ref' field and look at an individual entry you will see that documents we catalogued are marked 'description created by a Cheltenham Local History Society volunteer.' This could provide very useful publicity for the Society.

Many of the documents we catalogued were fairly straightforward even if, at times, not very easy to read, but some stood out as being very interesting or downright quirky. There was an entry (D2202/5/1) for Articles of Partnership dated August 1846 between Samuel Martin, Thomas Baskett and Henry Dunkerton Martin of 356, High Street, Cheltenham prior to their move to 4, Imperial Circus. In 2015, now called Martin & Co, they are still there. [In Rowe's picture on the front cover 'Martin & Baskett' can be seen over the shop on the right –Ed.] A bit of railway history was uncovered when several bound books, dated between 1866 and 1912, caught our eye and as we catalogued them we found that they were minute books of board meetings of The Swansea Wagon Company (D2202/5/6) and contained details of directors' remuneration, business plans and the financial position of the company. Also mentioned was the Cheltenham company of Shackleford, Ford & Co who became part of the group.

My favourite find was a prospectus for The Lucky Guss Goldmine, Cripple Creek, Colorado, USA (D2202/5/7) dated December 1895. It included a cross section plan of the mine with all abutments shown. I wonder if any shares were bought and if so did someone make a fortune?

Our current project is cataloguing the Ticehurst and Wyatt, Solicitors archive which, at the moment, has about 140 boxes with many more, including maps and estate plans, still to be sorted by GA staff. For this project we have joined forces with a group who were formed to help with the Cheltenham VCH project. We have already found several very interesting documents starting from the early 17th century which have been of interest to the professional editorial staff working on the 'Big Red Book of Cheltenham' and we look forward to finding a great deal more useful information in the future.

Russell Self

*FEATURE***JANE COOK**
An Extraordinary Cheltenham Lady

(The author wishes to acknowledge that much of his narrative, of which this is the first instalment, is based on an article written in 2001 by Alan Munden.)

Few Cheltenham people have heard of Jane Cook. Yet this remarkable woman was undoubtedly one of the most outstanding of the town's citizens. She was born on 22nd March 1775, baptised on 28th April in St Mary's Church and died aged 76 on 11th February 1851. Jane lived all her life in Cheltenham and was buried in St Peter's churchyard on the Tewkesbury Road. She was a well-known eccentric and despite her great wealth was very abstemious, living on a few hundred pounds a year. Jane was extremely secretive and withdrawn and it was not until she died and had plaques erected in her memory that anything of her life and ways were made public.

Jane's parents, John and Ann Cook, were buried at St Mary's but there is no record of the location or nature of their tomb. Very little is known of the source of the family's great wealth. John Cook was a builder and owned houses in the town. Evidence from the ongoing and increasing value of Jane's income suggests that her money was derived from a growing business. The annual income of her sister Elizabeth and herself was many thousands of pounds and could not have been simply the interest on family investments. Maybe they were related to John Cook who founded a brewery in Tetbury in 1800. Jane was related to the Walkers, well-off Gloucestershire timber merchants and public house owners, but other than this we know nothing of her family or ancestry.

There are no images of Jane because she lived before the days of photography and was too withdrawn to see any need for personal portraits. She probably dressed in black, carried an umbrella and behaved as a very conservative, quiet, dignified Victorian lady. At the time of her death she was living at Mrs Powell's lodging house at Belle Vue Buildings in the High Street.

Jane was very generous and gave away a fortune in support of charities in Britain and abroad. This giving was motivated by her religious convictions, particularly the need for the conversion of Jews to Christianity and the spreading of the evangelical protestant message. Her charity was concentrated on church building and education for poorer people. As a pious Christian she had friends amongst the evangelical Anglican clergy, in particular Charles Simeon, a leading evangelical preacher in Cambridge, and Francis Close who was the well-known Rector of Cheltenham between 1826 and 1856. She unobtrusively subsidised many of Close's enterprises in the early to mid-1800s. It is impossible to determine the true total value of her donations and bequests because most were not recorded.

The money left in her will amounted to about £2,800,000 in today's money. This was made up of about £500,000 to her family and about £2,300,000 in other bequests. Through her life she probably donated as much as ten million pounds and it is estimated that her annual income at her death was equivalent to about £3.5 million in modern money

It has been very difficult to find out much about Jane's life and works. She was unmarried and left no family, and she lived most of her life before the start of the 10-yearly national census in 1841. Although she lived at a time when even influential women kept in the shadows, hers was a particularly retiring nature. Today she is a largely unknown and forgotten figure in the history of Cheltenham, although she has been remembered recently in the name of Cook Villa, a hall of residence in the University of Gloucestershire.

My personal interest in Jane came about for several reasons. Firstly I worked for many years at Francis Close Hall of the University of Gloucestershire, which was built on land and with money given by Jane. Secondly I was intrigued by the story of such a generous yet mysterious benefactor. Thirdly, after working for many years in Patagonia in southern Chile I became intrigued by Anglican missionary activity amongst the Indians of the region, particularly the work of Allen Gardiner. Jane's gifts to support him led directly to his death.



The missionary Allen Gardiner



Allen Gardiner's death in Patagonia

Allen Gardiner toured Britain in the 1840s, begging for money to support his Patagonian Missionary Society. He received a generous donation from Jane Cook which he used to buy two eight metre launches. These boats were used to travel along the rocky and densely wooded Patagonian coast out of reach of the dangerous savages. Like his other efforts during many years of missionary endeavours, this

enterprise ended in a disastrous shambles, when in 1850 he died a horrible death from cold, wet and starvation. His body and those of his loyal companions were found stretched beside the launch donated by Jane.

By the end of the century the Patagonian Indians had become extinct, largely due to European illnesses. Gardiner's vow to bring every Indian into the fold of the Anglican Church had come true in a bitter and unexpected way. There were no Indians left.

Jane had a sister Elizabeth, who in 1801 married the Reverend Edward Tatham, a notorious clergyman and theological controversialist who was born in 1749 and died in 1834. Elizabeth was outgoing and confident where Jane was quiet and withdrawn. It is probable that the marriage was motivated by the wealthy woman's money. Edward Tatham was born in Yorkshire in 1749 and he retained his strong regional accent and blunt personality. He attended Cambridge and Oxford Universities and took priest's orders in 1778. His first appointment was as a curate in Banbury in Oxfordshire. He became well known when he was elected as Rector of Lincoln College in Oxford in 1792, where he remained until his death in 1834. Rather than being an academic Edward preferred to live the life of a country gentleman in the rectories of nearby Twyford in Buckinghamshire and Combe in Oxfordshire, which both came as attachments to his post at Lincoln College. He was a self-centred, pompous and conceited man. In about 1802 he preached a famous two and a half hour sermon in defence of a disputed verse in St John's first epistle. He concluded his lengthy discourse by leaving the subject to the learned bench of bishops, 'who have little to do and do not always do that little'. Despite his important university role he scarcely ever appeared at Oxford unless it was to bring a pair of pigs for sale in the market. Many caricatures and lampoons of him passed from hand to hand and he was known as 'the devil' that looked over Lincoln. Edward was buried in All Saints Church in Oxford where Elizabeth erected an effigy monument in his memory. His portrait was hung in the dining Hall of Lincoln College.



The Reverend Edward Tatham

Of the two sisters, monuments and documents emphasise Elizabeth rather than Jane, probably because of her marriage to a well-known and high-profile religious man. This sheds an interesting light on 19th century ideas about the relative importance of women, the social position of Elizabeth as the wife of an important clergyman being superior to that of Jane, the retiring spinster. In fact Jane and Elizabeth were both very strong characters. Elizabeth was a feisty lady who probably gave as much as or more than she received. She was a shrewd, capable woman, very ambitious, hard and harsh. In 1823 a Combe parishioner reported that she gave black eyes to her husband Edward and one of her maids. Maybe they had been up to mischief! After she was widowed Elizabeth spent time with Jane in Cheltenham. She died on 24th August 1847, a few years before her sister to whom she left her fortune. Jane Cook thus became richer than ever.

Mike Bell

(to be continued)



BOOKS FOR SALE



DONATED BOOKS IN 'AS NEW' CONDITION

The New Club by Neil Parrack (new), £8.50

A Grand City –Bristol in 18th and 19th Centuries –Ed M J Crossley Evans, now £6 (2 copies)

History of Cirencester by Beecham , now £23

Miniatures by Dudley Heath (1905) £20

Mee -The King's England series: Monmouthshire (First Edition 1951) now £14; Worcestershire, now £3; Warwickshire, now £3; Somerset, now £3.

Pevsner County Series: Wiltshire, (revised Cherry) now £10; Oxfordshire (with Sherwood) now £8; Suffolk, (revised Radcliffe) now £8; NE Norfolk & Norwich, now £8; NW & S Norfolk, now £8, or both for £12; Herefordshire now £8;

N Somerset & Bristol, now £8; Worcestershire, now £6; S & SW Somerset, now £6; Cumberland & Westmoreland (some loose pages) now £3.

BGAS RECORD SERIES (see November Newsletter for titles). Various prices between £5 and £20

Bigland's Gloucestershire Collections, Vols 2,3,5,8; 4 volumes for £30.

Gloucester Apprenticeship Registers, Vol 14, £10, Vol 25, £25, or both for £30

Gloucestershire Feet of Fines, Vol 16, £5; Vol 20, £5, Vol 27, £30 or all for £35

Berkeley Muniments, Vol 17, £5, Vol 18, £20, or both for £22

OTHER TITLES

Back again Mr Begbie by Revd Begbie, OBE (ex-Cheltenham College Day Boy) - £20 (new condition)

A Gloucester Boy, A Story of Life in the 1950s & 1960s by C Ballinger - £8.50 (new condition)

Don't forget to check out the Society's book table on lecture evenings, where many other books are on sale. You can always make me a reasonable offer on book table books. All donations are gratefully received – it is surprising how much we can raise for CLHS in this way. Contact me either on 01242 232740 (ex directory) or at heatherbell71@hotmail.com

Heather Atkinson

LOCAL NEWS

Cheltenham Camera Club 150th Anniversary

In 1865 Dr Edward Thomas Wilson, father of Dr Edward Adrian Wilson, the Antarctic explorer who died with Captain Scott at the South Pole, helped to found Cheltenham Camera Club (or Cheltenham Photographic Society as it was then known). In this way, Britain's sixth oldest amateur photographic society was established, a society which still thrives in today's digital age.

During its history the club has met in a variety of different venues throughout the town but, more recently, has become established at the Holy Apostles Church Hall, London Road, where it meets on Thursday evenings at 7.30 pm from September to May. At heart it has always been an amateur club but amended its membership rules in 1936 to allow professional photographers to join such as Hugo van Wadenoyen whose studios at 79, The Promenade were commemorated by the club with a Civic Society Blue Plaque.

Outings have always featured strongly in the club's calendar, the *Cheltenham Examiner*, for example, reporting on the club's 1871 excursion to Woodchester Park when 'some very good pictures were secured in spite of a rather cloudy day'. This year, as part of the sesquicentennial celebrations, the club plans to recreate one of the original excursions made to Raglan Castle. Regular club exhibitions have also contributed greatly to the town's local arts scene. Back in 1896, for example, its first major exhibition



An early Camera Club outing

attracted 900 national as well as local entries which covered 'every branch of the art.'

As the club looks optimistically to the future, it is interesting to reflect on the huge technological advances it has experienced. In 1909, for example, it excitedly looked forward to the advances offered by colour film and slide technologies, whilst 90 years later it began a pioneering new journey



The Club at Chedworth in the 1920s

into digital photography. I wonder what the next 150 years might bring!

In the meantime if anyone would like to find out about our current varied programme of high quality presentations and competitions, which includes the Gloucestershire Young Photographer of the Year, please come along to one of our

meetings (further details at www.cheltenhamcameraclub.co.uk). We have over 150 members and welcome photographers of all ages, interests and abilities within a friendly and supportive environment.

David Elder

(This article first appeared in the magazine 'perspectives'.)

Unlocking Pittville's Past

On 26th February Pittville History Works, established last year by Friends of Pittville, held its first public event in the Oval Room at the Pump Room.

The afternoon included talks by Steven Blake on the history of Pittville's buildings, including the Zoological Gardens proposed in the 1830s on the site of what is now Pittville school; John Simpson on Pittville's lively cast of residents and the possibilities offered by the group's unique searchable database; and Kath Boothman and Jill Waller on the visitors to Pittville they encountered while transcribing the Pittville Subscription Book of 1830-52.

Entry was free thanks to a Community Pride grant from Cheltenham Borough Council, and the numbers who turned up far exceeded our expectations for a modest local history event. We'd like to extend our sincere apologies to people who had to stand, and particularly to those who were turned away because of the pressure on space. Despite this the feedback has been very positive, with 87% of the people who filled in an evaluation form saying that they felt a greater sense of connection with their local community as a result of the event, and 84% saying that they would use the website in future or recommend it to others. Further details about the work of the group can be found at www.pittvillehistory.org.uk, where you can search the information which the group has so far collected on over 3,500 Pittville residents and over 40% of the pre-1860 houses in Pittville. Please contact us at info@pittvillehistory.org.uk if you would like to get involved in our work or receive news and progress reports by email.

Hilary Simpson

New Journal Editor Wanted

Next year's Journal will be the 32nd in the series and the 10th in which I have been involved. When I appealed in 2013 for someone to take over (or at least to join me initially as an apprentice), Jo Vials kindly volunteered, but she now finds she is unable to take the task on. So once again I am looking for someone to work with me on the next issue to 'learn the ropes' and eventually to take over the running of the Journal for a few years. The skills needed are not complicated, and even after next year's issue I shall still be around to give support if required. If you are interested, don't be daunted! To find out more, please get in touch by emailing me at journal.clhs@btinternet.com

Sally Self

*FEATURE***DISCOVERING EARLY MODERN CHELTENHAM**

Since the last Newsletter much of the work towards writing the early modern history of Cheltenham has focussed on the court books of Cheltenham manor. The manor of Cheltenham, a remnant of the feudal age, covered the parishes of Cheltenham, Charlton Kings, Leckhampton and Swindon. Its regular courts were primarily concerned with recording the inheritance, leasing or sale of land, as well as adjudicating disputes over property, allegations of trespass, and debt. Through studying these transactions one not only discovers the pattern of land ownership within the manor, but also catches glimpses of buildings and structures long gone, such as the Crown and Plough inns, the upper and lower market crosses, the market house and the court house. Over the period we can see the subdivision of property within the town, as the large houses and garden plots of the medieval period were turned into the shops, workhouses and tenements of a modern town.

The court was also concerned with the regulation of property held in common for the whole community, both the common land and the waterways and lanes that traversed the countryside. Individuals who polluted the rivers with the filth of their farms or workshops were punished. Every six months the view of frankpledge was taken, another medieval institution by which the inhabitants of each tithing, or distinct settlement within the manor, were held collectively responsible for the behaviour of their neighbours. Whilst justices of the peace and assize judges dealt with criminals, and the ecclesiastical courts dealt with heresy, fornication and defamation, the manorial court dealt with those individuals who disrupted the good order of the community. These included brawlers, common tipplers, who sold ale without licence and often in illegal measure, those who maintained illegal gambling houses, and wives who publically scolded their husbands.

Sometimes the desire to maintain the authority of the court, suppress disorderly conduct and protect the community were all shown in a single incident, such as the occasion in January 1611 when a group tried to put on a play in the town. A man called Dobbins 'in very disorderly and rude manner' marched up and down the high street on market day beating a drum and announcing a play to be put on that evening at the Crown. Fearing that plague, which had already broken out in Tredington and Prestbury, might also be in Cheltenham, the bailiff of the town ordered the men to desist, and also ordered the publican at the Crown not to put on the play. The group, young men of lowly status, were understandably unhappy, and left 'in a murmuring manner', only to try to stage the play in a different house later that evening. When the bailiff sent his deputy to order them to stop, he and the bailiff were 'much insulted and reviled against... with many railing and opprobrious terms saying they respected neither of them', although

they fled the scene before the bailiff himself arrived. It was this ‘contempt of all authority and good government’, especially by youths who were merely lowly ‘artificers and labourers’ which concerned the town authorities, more even than the threat of the spread of plague, and they fined the ring-leader 20 shillings. This seems to have been an unsettled time in Cheltenham’s history. Two months later a large fight broke out in the market place, apparently by unknown travellers. When the bailiff tried to put one of the combatants in the stocks, one of the townsmen refused his order for assistance, encouraged, ‘with unlawful words publically and openly [spoken]’, to resist by another townsman. Another man, a pedlar from Tewkesbury, was successfully arrested, but was able to break out of the town gaol and flee.



These sources provide a wealth of material about the history of early modern Cheltenham, but of course there are also gaps. Some property within Cheltenham manor was held as sub-manors; the Norwoods’ manor of Leckhampton and the Grevilles’ manor of Charlton Kings had their own courts, officers and records, while other, smaller sub-manors were really little more than large freehold properties. One must use other methods to trace the history of these. A freehold estate called Power’s Court, for instance, can be traced through the surviving deeds. These reveal that the ownership of the property passed from the Packer family in the 16th century to the widow Mary Stokes in the 18th, to the Hughes family in the early 19th. The deeds also reveal the transformation of Cheltenham over the course of the 18th century. Mary Stokes had converted part of her grand mansion in the east end of the High Street into a ball room. By the early 19th century the Hughes family had expanded the Ball Room House, now called the Lower Assembly Rooms, and built a grand new house called Rodney Lodge behind it. Power’s Court House had been divided into three shops, respectively held by jewellers, a dressmaker, and a lace maker, indicative of the genteel clientele now frequenting the Assembly Rooms.

Such deeds are vital for our understanding of the history of Cheltenham, but several important collections held by the Gloucestershire Archives remain uncatalogued. Most important for the history of Cheltenham is a large collection (D2025) of material deposited by the Ticehurst, Wyatt and Co firm of solicitors. Roland Ticehurst also acted as steward of Cheltenham manor, and the collection includes much material relating to the Agg-Gardner family, who were lords of the manor in the later 19th century. Other collections include documents belonging to the Prinn family, and material deposited by Jesus College, Oxford, which owned a large farm in Alstone. A group of our dedicated volunteers is now undertaking the cataloguing of these collections. (See Russell Self’s report on p15.) This will be a long task, but by starting the work now we hope to make much of this material available by the time we begin writing the later history of the town.

Alex Craven

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CAN YOU HELP?

Harriett Cousens, *née* Light

Harriett was born in Dublin in 1806. Her father and three elder brothers were all military men. After her father died in 1826 she and her mother Mary Light came to live in Cheltenham. On April 12th 1830 Harriett married Walter Cousens at Clifton Church, Wilton, near Taunton. In 1838 the couple and their 4 children emigrated to Australia, where Harriett soon established herself as a teacher of music and singing. According to Australian newspaper reports she had been a singer with the Drury Lane Company and had also taught and performed in Cheltenham. By her own account she was known professionally in England as Miss Grant, but this has not been proved. Does anyone know anything about this lady?

Marsden Road, Pittville

A Cheltonian who emigrated to Perth, Australia in 1968 had previously lived since 1948 at 'Southfields', Marsden Road. Now feeling nostalgic for his home town, he would appreciate any information about the houses in Marsden Road and their former occupants.

If you can help with either of these queries please contact Joyce Cummings on 01242 527299 or e-mail joyce@cyberwebSPACE.net

NEXT ISSUE

Please forward articles for inclusion in the July 2015 issue by

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to the Editor : Kath Boothman, 3 Taylor's End, Cheltenham GL50 2QA

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